



THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

COUNTRY PROFILE

MEPI in the UAE: Expanding Civil Society through Dialogue

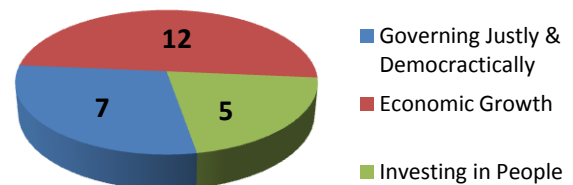
MEPI is working in the UAE to help Emiratis who want to expand civil society in a developing legal and traditional social environment. Women, students, parents, and business leaders have benefitted from MEPI training projects that allow them to better address their needs. With its partners, MEPI promotes civic education for students, opportunities for women to lead, and exchanges between organizations from the UAE and the U.S. This partnership also brings together a wide range of community leaders to facilitate dialogue and encourage Emiratis to exercise their rights. Expanding interaction and dialogue with students, women, journalists, university faculty, and training institutions helps expand the network of individuals and institutions promoting reform from within.

MEPI's UAE Portfolio

There are currently 24 active MEPI projects in the UAE: 19 multi-country projects including the UAE; and 4 UAE-specific projects.

The pie chart shows which U.S. Foreign Assistance objectives are addressed by MEPI programming in the UAE.

MEPI Projects by F-Objective



MEPI's Partnerships in the UAE



UAE General Women's Union: "Know Your Rights!" This MEPI-funded project is designed to empower Emirati women to understand their legal rights and increase their awareness of personal status law in the UAE and its application. In addition, this project trains women on their legal rights under the recent labor and human resources laws. The "Know Your Rights!" training program witnessed participation well beyond expectations throughout the country, as well as very positive local press coverage since its inception in November 2009.

The Women's Empowerment and Legislative Strengthening in the Arab Gulf project, implemented by the **International Republican Institute (IRI)**, provided the General Women's Union in the UAE with training on Developing Leadership Skills for Women. Through this training, dozens of professional women of varied backgrounds and experience levels from five different emirates acquired leadership, problem-solving, and cross-gender and cross-cultural management skills.

The MEPI-funded **Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP)** was instrumental in supporting the UAE's accession in 2006 to the 1958 New York Convention on the Recognition of Foreign Arbitral Awards, a key convention in creating a transparent and investor-friendly regulatory environment. CLDP began work in the UAE in 2004, collaborating with the Dubai International Arbitration Centre, and provided input to the Ministry of Justice on the draft law to implement the NY Convention in the Emirates. In 2007, CLDP began providing guidelines for the judicial treatment of arbitral decisions and awards.

Zayed University's "Youth's Engagement through Digital Media" has exposed youth in the Gulf to a new outlet for expressing their thoughts and concerns - Public Service Announcements (PSAs). PSAs are an effective means of encouraging debate among youth, culminating community discussions, and encouraging civic activism. Nadia Rahman, Assistant Professor at Zayed University, held a ten-day digital media workshop in the spring of 2009 for students of the College of Communication and Media Sciences at Zayed University in Dubai, and is organizing another workshop in the spring of 2010 for students in the emirate of Fujairah, on how to conceptualize, film, produce, and edit their own PSAs. The produced PSAs will each carry an awareness message on a societal issue of concern for youth, will be screened and evaluated by a panel jury, and uploaded on YouTube by June 2010.